

Regular Session, 2010

SENATE BILL NO. 652

BY SENATOR HEBERT

VOTERS/VOTING. Requires that propositions placed on a ballot be worded in plain simple grammar in the form of a question. (1/1/11)

AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 18:1299.1, relative to elections; to provide that any question or proposition to be voted on must also include a question in simple language directed to the voter with regard to the passage or rejection of the proposition; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 18:1299.1 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

§1299.1. ~~Statement of question~~ **Question** or proposition to be voted on; ~~statement~~ length

A. The preparation of ~~the statement of any~~ **a** question or proposition to be submitted to the voters at an election shall be the responsibility of the governing authority or other entity calling the election or submitting the question or proposition. The ~~statement of the proposition shall also include a simple and unbiased concise summary in easily understood language which sets forth the substance of the proposition~~ **be comprised of simple, unbiased, concise, and easily understood language and be in the form of a question.** The ~~statement of the proposition, including the summary,~~ shall not exceed ~~four~~ **two** hundred words in

1           length. ~~Such summary shall be placed at the beginning of the statement of the~~  
2           ~~proposition.~~

3                   B. The secretary of state shall be responsible for ensuring that the ~~statement~~  
4           ~~of the proposition contains the summary as provided in Subsection A~~ **complies with**  
5           **the requirements** of this Section.

6                   Section 2. This Act shall become effective January 1, 2011.

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The original instrument was prepared by Alden A. Clement, Jr. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Cathy Wells.

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#### DIGEST

Hebert (SB 652)

Present law provides that the preparation of the statement of any question or proposition to be submitted to the voters at an election is the responsibility of the governing authority or other entity calling the election or submitting the question or proposition. Present law provides that the statement of the proposition is to include a simple and unbiased concise summary in easily understood language which sets forth the substance of the proposition.

Proposed law requires the proposition be comprised of simple, unbiased, concise, and easily understood language and to be in the form of a question.

Present law further provides that the statement of the proposition, including the summary, cannot exceed 400 words in length.

Proposed law prohibits the proposition from exceeding 200 words.

Present law provides that this summary is to be placed at the beginning of the statement of the proposition.

Proposed law removes the requirement that a summary be included on the ballot.

Present law provides that the secretary of state is responsible for ensuring that the statement of the proposition contains the summary required by present law.

Proposed law requires the secretary of state to ensure the proposition complies with the requirements of proposed law.

Effective January 1, 2011.

(Amends R.S. 18:1299.1)

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

##### Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill.

1. Changes the content of the proposition from a statement of the proposition also containing a question in easily understood language to a simple, unbiased, concise, and easily understood language in the form of a question.

2. Reduces the maximum number of words in the proposition from 400 words to 200 words.
3. Removes the requirement that a summary of the proposition be included on the ballot.
4. Removes the requirement that the secretary of state is responsible for ensuring the proposition contains a summary.
5. Adds the requirement that the secretary of state is responsible for ensuring the proposition complies with proposed law.
6. Changes the effective date from August 15, 2010 to January 1, 2011.